Information Technology for rural areas

564. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any plan to formulate a scheme for residents of rural areas to provide benefits of Information Technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount to be spent in the scheme and allocation thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) The Working Group of IT for masses has given recommendation regarding benefit of IT for rural residents. In principle the recommendations have been accepted by the Ministry. A National IT Mission has been set up recently to oversee the implementation of recommendations of the Working Group.

(b) MIT has been implementing pilot programmes and projects for the benefit of rural areas which can be replicated by other agency including State Governments. Projects taken up in rural areas are at Statement. (*See* below)

(c) The estimated cost of CIC project implementation is Rs. 220 crores for NE-Regions. Out of which, Rs. 67.0 crores have been allocated for the current financial year *i.e.* 2001-2002. However, since the scheme is being implemented in composite manner, State-wise allocation of funds is not envisaged.

Statement

Projects taken up in rural areas

(1) Samadhan Kendra

Four Pilot "SAMADHAN KENDRA" projects have been initiated in the country, two in Madhya Pradesh, one each in AP and Tamilnadu. Based on the sustainability and usefulness of these projects in rural areas, further expansion schemes would be formulated in consultation with concerned State Government and Rural Departments.

Samadhan Kendras are conceived as Village Information Centres for providing locally relevant content and information to the Villagers on topics such as agricultural practices, health status of communities educational opportunities, government schemes, and employment opportunities.

(2) Community Information Centre (CIC)

With a view to accelerating the socio-economic development of the community in hilly areas of difficult geographical terrain having poor infrastructural and communication facilities in the North-East region of the country, a scheme was approved for providing connectivity by setting up Community Information Centres (CICs) at all the block headquarters in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

A pilot project was launched in August, 2000 at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 crores by setting up 30 CICs in the aforesaid States at sites selected by the State Government. These systems are being used by the community mainly for browsing the Internet and utilising the E-mail facilities. The school and college children are also using these facilities extensively. Based on the experience gained with existing CICs there is a proposal to set up another 457 CICs at the remaining block headquarters of these States. The project cost is to the tune of Rs. 220 crores which is under SFC approval.

Employment Opportunities

†565. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that availability of employment opportunities in the country had been less as compared to its requirement from 1993-94 to 1999-2000;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

(c) the annual rate of increase in the number of unemployed persons in the country during the above said period; and

(d) the annual rate of availability of employment opportunities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (d) On the basis of surveys carried out by the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.